Arizona Sentinel.

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THE NECESSITY of EDUCATION

In our article of last issue, under the above head, we pointed out some facts which seem to have aroused the indignation of some of our foreign-born citizens. We take not back what we have said, on the contrary, we repeat again, there are men who land upon our shores who are "brutally ignorant." But we erred in one thing, and that is in not mentioning the fact that many—aye, a great many of our native born Americans are so brutally ignorant as not to know their own language. Therefore the necessity of a compulsory system of education is needed in this country, not alone to force intelligence into the minds of the children of foreigners who have made this their home, but also our own offsprings.

Notwithstanding the number and variety of schools—public, private, elementary and higher grades—and the consequent general education of our people, there are now, as there have been, vast numbers who cannot read and write. The United States census for 1860 shows the number of white persons, over the age of 20 years, unable to read and write, to be 1,126,575. If we add to this number 91,736 free colored illiterate adults, and 1,653,800 adult slaves, now free, we have the alarming aggregate of 2,872,111, or nearly 3,000,000 of our adult population, to say nothing of the young persons who are growing up in ignorance (over three millions in number), are reported as wholly ignorant—beasts of burden.

Our illiterate are, most of them, we are sorry to say, native born. In 1860, according to the census, there were, of our illiterate adults, but 346,893 of foreign birth, while there were 871,418 native born.

In connection with the above figures, we extract the following from the annual report of the Commissioner of Education:

* * * From such facts as this, and from careful comparisons of the census reports of the several States, and for the several years 1840, 1850 and 1860, there can be no doubt that the figures of the census may be relied on as much below the painful truth.

But there is a further view to be taken on the question. There are large numbers of persons who can read a little, but who read so imperfectly, and with such hesitation and difficulty, that they DO NOT read at all. They are practically, if not absolutely, illiterate. There are many words that on account of our irregular and difficult spelling they cannot understand, and many more that they make out slowly and with great difficulty. The attempt to read is to them so profitless, so dull, and so laborious, that they give it up, and make little or no use of books and newspapers. * * *

We only depict the true state of our feelings when we say that we are heartfelt sorry that any portion of our community, of foreign birth, should deem that the article published in our last issue was an attack upon their state of civilization or the institutions of their father-land. The idea we meant to communicate was simply that our present system of education is inadequate, and that the compulsory system, if generally adopted, would not only enhance the value of American institutions, but would operate as a preserver of those institutions. We did not mean that foreigners or their progeny were the only persons in need of this reformation, but that all would be benefited by the adoption of such a system. If any person or persons descry anything erroneous or culpable in the article alluded to, we can only ask them to circumscribe or confine the origin to the head, and not attribute it to the heart.

Juries and the Challenge System.

The absurdity of the existing rules for the selection of juries is again illustrated by the proceedings in the Stokes trial, at New York. The second panel of jurors has been exhausted, and but four have been accepted. In the last panel the defense challenged peremptorily thirty times. At this rate it may take until next Chistmas to obtain a jury; yet though it is apparent that this delay is a part of the plan of defense, and intended to defeat justice, the Court must submit to it. In such cases the greater the notoriety of the crime the more dificult is it to secure a jury, for in a city like New York, where the daily papers are read by nearly every person of average intelligence, there must be abundant opportunity for challeges on the score of prejudice. The rule followed usually is that if the juror admits having read the account of the crime in the papers, whether or no he has formed an opinion on such reports, he is challenged. As a matter of fact, no person of sufficient intelligence to serve on the jury in such a case as that of Stokes can have failed to read the papers, and few probably have failed to form an opinion. Here, again, the absurdity and unreason of the system appears; for it is assumed, under it, that no person who has come to an opinion from reading a newspaper report of a crime can weigh the evidence impartially, and a true verdict render. This is the merest nonsense, but in fact it would seem that the cus om had been framed expressly for the benefit of criminals, and against the interests of justice. The logical result of it is to secure the impaneling of the most abjectly stupid and unintelligent jury that can be weeded out of half a dozen panels. The object of such action is plain. The counsel for the defense, when they have a specially bad case to defend, cannot hope to cajole an intelligent jury, but they may pull wool over the eyes of such a set of blockheads as can be gathered from that small minority who never read the papers. There can be no pretence of guarding the defendant against sinister influences, for such points are always guarded by the peremptory challenge, and the jury is certain, in any event, to be selected from persons who are wholly indifferent to the criminal.

It is impossible to adduce a single valid reason in defense of this practice. It is in effect a wresting of the plain letter of the law from its true intent, in the interest of the criminal, and its sole tendency is to delay, and to defeat, justice. It is a disgraceful anomaly that in this age we should so senselessly submit to a practice which results in placing the trial of the most heinous offenders in the hands of the least intelligent, and possibly the least honest, portion of the community. We say least honest, because it is obvious that the friends of the prisoner may get on the jury by swearing that they know nothing of the case, and have not seen any account of it in the papers. This Stokes case is a striking test of the principle involved, and we hope that the injustice of the practice as presented in it, may draw public attention to the question, and lead to an amendment of the law in this regard. The public will perceive that here a practice ostensibly devised for the furtherance of the ends of justice, really operates in the contrary direction, and enables the criminal to delay the trial, and to increase the odds of acquittal in proportion to the stupidity of the jury. It may be possible in trivial cases to secure competent panels under this system, but it is certain that it involves an increasing incompetence in the jurors as the character of the crime, and its notoriety, ascends in magnitude. Every man in New York, of course, knows just how Jas. Fisk, Jr., was killed, so far as the papers could tell them, and therefore, according to this rule, every man in New York is disabled from serving on the jury. The possession of ordinary intelligence is, in fact, sufficient to debar any man from trying a criminal, and thus it not seldom happens that offenders are tried by their literal "peers"—namely, by other criminals. How justice is affected it is not necessary to point out. A reference to the criminal calendar of New York will speedily settle that question. —[Sac. Record.

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